

Ephesians 6:5-9

Slaves & Masters

*Historic context here: Notice, early Christianity, as taught through the apostles Paul and Peter did **not** attempt to overthrow the legal institution of slavery within the Roman Empire, which would have been sowing rebellion against that empire. Early Christianity had to leave the worldly and governmental institution of slavery alone. But what God was doing which transcended the power of Roman law, was he was calling to salvation, implanting his Holy Spirit into a large number of slaves and slave owners, transforming them as a witness to Rome of God's power and the puniness of Rome's power. Although famous Christians who have become a part of leadership, like in the British Empire, such as William Wilberforce, helped end slavery within that empire, he did it within the laws of England, and never was a sword raised or a gun fired in anger to end slavery. Early Christians under the apostles never bore arms, they weren't called to do that. Jesus as much stated that to Pilate just before his crucifixion.*

What The Apostle Paul Has To Say About Slaves & Masters

Ephesians 6:5-9, "Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him." In *verse 5* Paul is saying, **'Slaves, obey your physical masters--esteem other's higher than yourselves.'** But Paul is also showing us and them that they have a higher freedom. Christianity doesn't instigate revolution. **Psalm 75:4-7, 'To the arrogant I say, 'Boast no more,' and to the wicked, 'Do not lift your horns against**

heaven; do not speak with outstretched neck.' No one from the east or the west or from the desert can exalt a man. But it is God who judges: He brings one down, he exalts another." To buck authority is to buck God himself.

What The Apostle Peter Has To Say About Slaves & Masters

1st Peter 2:13-25, "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king. Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

"He committed no sin, And no deceit was found in his mouth. [Isa. 53:9]"

When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls."

Now Back To The Apostle Paul Again

Romans 13:1-6, “Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing.” Romans 12:1, “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.” How do we do this? By surrendering fully to God, so the Holy Spirit enters us (more fully), and when we sacrifice our own wills to the will of the Spirit then Romans 12:1 can be fulfilled in us. **Romans 12:9-21, “Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ [Deut. 32:35.] says the Lord. On the contrary: ‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.’ [Prov. 25:21-22.] Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”** The following Scripture shows us the plane we want to

be living on if you want to see the good life. This is the secret to Paul's inner peace, in spite of the hellish outside circumstances he lived in. **Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, But Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave himself for me."**

The next section of Ephesians 6 is about putting on the whole armor of God. In effect, putting on this armor is accomplished by putting on Christ, which Paul so apply just described in Galatians 2:20.